



1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Assumption Junior School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - A positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - Effective leadership;
 - A school-wide approach;
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff;
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.



3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:
The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in Assumption Junior School are class teachers, support teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows



Links to the Curriculum

The school implements the SPHE curriculum, according to our school plan, this includes the teaching of Stay Safe Programmes. This programme is taught in its entirety every second year. The Walk Tall Programme will be used to support the SPHE curriculum

The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

School Community

Throughout the school huge emphasis is placed on respect for all members of the school community; adults should model the type of behaviours they promote to pupils.

The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities.

Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff members develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.

Bullying is discussed at staff meetings.

School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community (eg: talks for parents on Stay Safe, Internet Safety/cyberbullying).

Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities.

Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.

Supervision also applies to monitoring pupils' use of communication technology within the school.

No child is allowed to have a personal mobile phone or tablet in school.

Buddy system and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with pupils and it is available on the school website.

The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures, for example at group assemblies.

Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance.

It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:

- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Hand note in with homework.
- Worry box for older children.
- Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.



- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- All teachers will teach children to recognise bullying behaviour and encourage them to use their voice to say 'no' to such behaviour

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

Investigation:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents will be investigated outside the classroom to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- Teachers who are investigating bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. This record will be maintained on Aladdin with appropriate protection levels applied.
- Should a teacher establish that bullying has occurred s/he must use Appendix 3 to record all information (this is available in Aladdin Documents)
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- It is school policy to request the assistance of another staff member in such investigations.
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
- It may also be helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s) (if appropriate).
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the



school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

In Assumption Junior School we try to enable those involved to engage in a mediated conversation, the purpose of which is to allow for the victim to have a voice and the perpetrator to understand the consequences of their actions. All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practice.

- A verbal warning is given to the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour. This is done in the presence of the perpetrator's parent(s), the Principal and another teacher. The perpetrator is requested to apologise to the victim in the presence of the Principal and another teacher and to give an assurance that the offending behaviour will stop.
- There may be loss of specific privileges which may include the following: exclusion from break/lunchtime play for a specific number of days; parents may be requested to escort their child to and from school (this is in extreme circumstances).
- If bullying reoccurs, it may be deemed necessary to have the perpetrator sign a contract of agreement to stop the bullying behaviour. This would also be signed by the parent(s)/ guardian(s) The contract will be monitored regularly by the Principal with the assistance of the class teacher and another member of staff to see that the situation is resolved.
- If after the above, the bullying behaviour reoccurs a formal meeting of the perpetrator, his/her parents /guardians, the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held, and a formal suspension may occur.

The Principal has the authority to enact an immediate suspension. Alternatively, in certain circumstances he/she may issue a final warning to the perpetrator.



- While the school supports parents and pupils in dealing with issues that arise outside of school, parents should be aware that the school is limited in its power to deal fully with issues that arise while the children are not under our care.

Follow up:

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Has the bullying behaviour has ceased?
- Have the issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable?
- Have the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable?
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if this is deemed necessary and if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording:***Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred***

- All staff keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents should be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. The relevant teacher must inform the Principal of all incidents being investigated.

**Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Formal Stage 2-known as Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template known as **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour. This template is available in Aladdin Documents.

It will be used only in the following circumstances:

- In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
- Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.
- When the recording template is completed, it will be retained on Aladdin in line with our Data Protection Policy.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Teacher conversations with pupils.
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school intervention
- SPHE lessons
- Circle Time and similar strategies in order to address issues.
- Anti-bullying programme (Stay Safe and Walk Tall) and awareness-raising throughout the school year.
- Social skills groups.
- If a pupil requires further support NEPS will be contacted for advice.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.



9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 12/10/2021.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed:

Handwritten signature of Maureen Sweeney in black ink on a light-colored background.

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 12/10/2021

Signed:

Handwritten signature of the Principal in black ink on a light-colored background.

(Principal)

Date: 12/10/2021

Date of next review: June 2022